



EMPOWERMENT OF SCHEDULED CASTE/SCHEDULED TRIBE CHILDREN UNDER SARVA SHIKSHA ABHIYAN OF TAMIL NADU

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ABSTRACT

The Policy and its Programme of Action (POA), 1992 contains specific directions and measures for the educational upliftment of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), which means 'Movement of Education for All' was implemented as one of India's flagship programmes for universalising elementary education. Its overall goals include universal access and retention, bridging of gender and social category gaps in education and enhancement of learning levels of children. 600 students belonging to SC/ST groups of primary schools in Tamil Nadu were randomly selected as the sample. Analysis of the results revealed that many activities for the empowerment of SC/ST students were carried out by schools in the selected districts of Tamil Nadu. These programmes are helpful in increasing self confidence in students. Among these, community living camp, learn to earn programmes, exposure trips and remedial teaching are the major activities. Community living camps and exposure trips were beneficial to increase leadership ability and to develop social feeling. The study also showed that more programmes for the empowerment of SC/ST students are needed.

KEY WORDS: Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribes.

Introduction

In India, the National Policy on Education (NPE), 1986 as updated in 1992, lays special emphasis on the removal of disparities and equalization of educational opportunities by attending to the specific needs of those who have been denied equality so far. The Policy and its Programme of Action (POA), 1992 contains specific directions and measures for the educational upliftment of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. Special provisions for Scheduled Casts and Scheduled Tribes have been incorporated in the existing schemes.

The literature indicates that a number of steps to promote education of SC children have been taken, which include free supply of textbooks and stationery at all stages of school education, free uniforms to children in government approved hostels and Ashrams schools, and in some states for children in regular schools. Steps have also been taken for free education at all levels, pre-metric stipends and scholarships to students at middle and/or high school stage, special scheme of pre-metric scholarships for children of Scheduled castes and families engaged in unclean occupations like scavenging, tanning and flaying of animal skin, girls and boys hostels for SC students and lodging facilities in hostels of backward classes including SC or ST, scholarships to SC students studying in private schools. However, the children of this section of society have not found achieved the desired goal due to inadequate attention of the concerned authorities towards various educational facilities in the schools of rural areas.

. With the formulation of NPE, India initiated a wide range of programmes for achieving the goal of UEE. These efforts were intensified in the 1980s and 1990s through several schematic and programme interventions. Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), which means 'Movement of Education for All' was implemented as one of India's flagship programmes for universalising elementary education. Its overall goals include universal access and retention, bridging of gender and social category gaps in education and enhancement of learning levels of children.

In Tamil Nadu, which is a southern state of India, the progress in respect of enrollment and participation of SC/ST children has been quite satisfactory over the past nine years. Much emphasis has been given to the improvement of access in remote, tribal areas through Alternate and Innovative education programmes. The educational development of children belonging to the Scheduled castes and Scheduled Tribes was a special focus in the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan programme. Every activity under SSA Project must identify the benefits that will accrue to children from these communities. The present study is an analysis of programmes implemented for SC/ST students under Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan in Tamil Nadu.

OBJECTIVE

To analyze the implementation of Education for Scheduled Caste/Scheduled Tribe students in Tamil Nadu under Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan with respect to different activities carried out and the benefits of activities.

Materials and Methods:

Design: It is an exploratory study and mostly qualitative techniques are employed.

Sample

600 students belonging to SC/ST groups were randomly selected from 50 primary schools under different districts of Tamil Nadu as the sample for the study

Tools used

- General Data Sheet
- Questionnaire for Focus Group Discussion

Statistical techniques

Due to the qualitative nature of the study, percentages were calculated wherever necessary.

Results:

MAJOR FINDINGS

To get a clear idea of the intervention of SSA to the education of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, the investigator analyzed the information received from the General Data Sheet and Focus group discussion and details are presented below.

1. Activities carried out by schools for the Empowerment of SC/ST Students Responses from the General Data Sheet revealed the important activities carried out in schools by SSA of Tamil Nadu for the empowerment of SC/ST students, as given in Table 1.

TABLE 1: Activities carried out in Tamil Nadu for the Empowerment of SC/ST Students

Important activities	Percentage of Schools Conducted the Activities
1. Life skill training	56
2. Exposure visit	36
3. English communication training	22
4. Provision of dictionaries	10
5. Exposure visit to Chennai	82
6. Tailoring and embroidery	10
7. Candle making	6
8. Health programme	32

In Tamil Nadu, 56 percent of schools conducted life skill training. 36 percent of schools conducted exposure visit, 22 percent English communication training. 10 percent of respondents reported about the provision of dictionaries and 82 percent of respondents about exposure visit to Chennai, the capital of the state. 10 percent schools conducted tailoring and embroidery classes, 6 percent organized

candle making and 32 percent organized health related programmes.

1. Programmes organized by SSA for Empowerment of SC/ST students

Table 2 gives details of empowerment programmes organized by SSA for SC/ST students.

TABLE 2: Programmes for Empowerment of SC/ST students by SSA

Sl. No	Activities Conducted	Percentage of Schools implemented
1.	Learn to earn programme	83
2.	Exposure trip	67
3.	Cultural friendly Learning Materials	- -
4.	Enrichment programme	100
5.	Remedial teaching	83
6.	Community Living Camp	100
7.	Cultural meet	- -
8.	Distribution of free learning aids	68

Details presented in Table 2 shows that SSA conducted different types of programmes in schools for the empowerment of SC/ST students. Among these, Learn to Earn programme, exposure trips and remedial teaching are conducted by a higher percentage of schools. All schools reported to have organized community living camps and enrichment programmes in as per direction from SSA, Tamil Nadu.

Data was analysed to get an idea about how SC /ST students are selected for the different programmes.

Selection of SC/ST students for Community living camp

Responses from the focus groups regarding the criteria for selection of students for community living camp revealed the information given in Table 3.

TABLE 3: Selection Criteria of SC/ST Students for Community Living Camp

Criterion	%
• Based on the class division	41
• Special selection considering the ability	27
• Based on curricular and co-curricular performance	13

It can be seen that 27 percent of the schools selected students for community living camp considering the ability or performance of the students. 13 percent from Tamil Nadu considered their performance in curricular and co-curricular activities. 41 percent of schools selected SC/ST students based on their class division.

Benefits of the Community Living Camp to SC/ST Students

Responses of the focus groups revealed the benefits for community living camp. Table 4 gives the details.

TABLE 4: Benefits of the Community Living Camp

Benefits	%
• Opportunity for sharing personal experiences with others	13
• Helped to develop social feeling and cooperative mentality	8
• Helped to increase leadership	27
• Helped SC/ST students to reach in the mainstream	15

Majority of the groups revealed that the Community living camps helped to develop and increase social feeling and cooperative mentality among SC/ST students and also. It was an opportunity for sharing personal experiences with other students. 27 percent from Tamil Nadu responded that it helped to increase leadership.

Benefits of Exposure Trip

Responses of General Data Sheet and Focus Group Discussion revealed that exposure trip was conducted by a higher percent of the schools in Tamil Nadu. They also reported that the exposure trips were beneficial to SC/ST students in different ways. Table 5 reveals the details.

TABLE 5: Benefits of Exposure Trips

Benefits	%
• Development of personality	18
• To increase knowledge	8
• To increase self confidence	18
• For mental development	8
• For increasing leadership ability	16
• For becoming self reliant	8
• For developing co-operative mentality	8

Majority of the schools from Tamil Nadu reported the benefits of Exposure Trips as to increase knowledge, self confidence and mental development. It also helped SC/ST students to increase leadership ability, to become self reliant and for developing cooperative mentality.

iii) Other Activities Conducted

For empowering SC/ST students other activities are also conducted by schools of Tamil Nadu as detailed in Table 6.

TABLE 6: Other Activities Conducted for SC/ST Students

Activities	Percentage of Schools
• Training programmes	18
• Field trips	16
• Yoga classes	5
• Distribution of learning materials	37
• Awareness classes/ counseling	38

It can be seen that 18 percent of the schools in Tamil Nadu conducted training programmes or classes to the SC/ST students, 37 percent of the schools from Tamil Nadu distributed learning materials to the students. 16 percent of the schools from Tamil Nadu conducted field trips and 38 percent of schools conducted awareness programmes/ counselling to the SC/ST students. Only 5 percent of schools conducted Yoga classes

iv) Programmes for keeping the cultural identity of Tribal Students

The study examined whether any programme to keep the cultural identity of Tribal students have conducted or not. Responses obtained from focus group discussion are presented in Table 7.

TABLE 7: Programmes to Keep Cultural Identity of Tribal Students

Programmes to Keep Identity	Percentage of Schools
No activities	50
Folk song/ Archery Competition	16
Awareness classes	9
Festival celebrations	16
Meeting with cultural leaders/artists	9

50 percent of the respondents from Tamil Nadu reported that no activities were carried out for keeping cultural identity of the Tribal students. But 16 percent reported that folk song competition, Archery competition etc. were carried out. Awareness classes, festival celebrations and meeting with cultural leaders/artists were also carried out.

Discussion/Conclusion:

Analysis of the results obtained in education of SC/ST students revealed that many activities for the empowerment of SC/ST students are carried out by schools in the selected districts of Tamil Nadu. These programmes are helpful in increasing self confidence in students. Among these, sahavasa camp (community living camp), learn to earn programmes, exposure trips and remedial teaching are the major activities. Community living camps and exposure trips were beneficial to increase leadership ability and to develop social feeling. Learn and earn programmes were beneficial to develop work culture and for financial benefit. Other activities conducted for the group include training programmes and awareness classes. But a very few activities were carried out to keep the cultural identity of Schedule Tribe students. Also, the study showed that more programmes for the empowerment of SC/ST students are needed

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